National Disability Insurance Scheme
The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is being rolled out progressively across Queensland, representing a fresh approach to how disability services are funded and delivered.

Core principles of the NDIS relate to empowerment of people with disability and providing participants with choice and control over the support they access.

The NDIS will bring wide-ranging changes for disability service providers in terms of the types of jobs and skills required. The state’s workforce is also expected to increase significantly over the next four to five years.

WorkAbility Qld
WorkAbility Qld is a consortium of industry bodies working in collaboration with the disability sector, government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to deliver local and statewide workforce solutions to meet demand under the NDIS in Queensland.

WorkAbility Qld comprises the following organisations:
- Community Services Industry Alliance
- National Disability Services
- Queensland Council of Social Service.

NDIS Training and Skills Support Strategy
The NDIS Training and Skills Support Strategy (NTSSS) is an industry-led, multifaceted approach to developing a quality workforce capable of delivering services reflective of the needs of NDIS participants across Queensland.

It was developed by WorkAbility Qld in partnership with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

The NTSSS represents an investment of $5 million over three years for training, support and workforce development activities, and is additional to funding available under mainstream training programs.

WorkAbility Qld provides leadership for the strategy – with responsibility for governance, engagement, project delivery and evaluation.

Vocational education and training investment
Queensland’s vocational education and training (VET) sector is playing a critical role in supporting the rapid jobs growth and quality of the workforce required for NDIS success.

The 2018-19 Annual VET Investment Plan (the plan) details the Queensland Government’s $777.9 million investment in VET. The plan supports demand-driven funding arrangements across a number of program areas, and provides support for disadvantaged learners and other priority student cohorts to participate in training.

In recent years, Queensland Government subsidised training has contributed significantly to meeting the increasing skills demands in the health and community services industry and, in particular, disability support. There is a need, however, to optimise this investment to support the growth of the NDIS workforce through a strategic and targeted approach.

The NTSSS will guide Queensland’s training system to respond effectively to the needs of an industry that is growing and experiencing change, and will foster quality training that embeds the principles of choice and control as key tenets of working in the disability sector.
Target participants
The diversity of people accessing support under the NDIS will require a workforce skilled in providing a wide range of services.

Student cohorts identified as priorities for the NTSSS include people with disability; carers; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; secondary school and tertiary students; and people seeking a career change.

NTSSS objectives
The NTSSS aims to address the following training and skills objectives over the next three years:

- development of a systemic regional VET support system that will promote suitable and high quality training delivery;
- ongoing capability for non-government organisations to work productively and effectively with registered training organisations;
- skills and training aligned with NDIS principles;
- governance that focuses on industry decision-making; and
- optimum use of programs under the plan.

NTSSS priorities
To achieve these objectives, three key priority areas for the NTSSS have been established:

- upskilling the workforce to transition to the new NDIS framework – through training and professional development activities;
- growing the NDIS workforce – with recruitment based on the values and attributes of the individual, and reflective of the diversity of NDIS participants; and
- improving VET quality – with consideration of both workplace learning, skills requirements, and NDIS core principles.

These key focus areas were identified by WorkAbility Qld based on extensive stakeholder consultations and engagement.

NTSSS implementation process
To enable the NTSSS to be responsive and continuously shaped, projects relating to the key priority areas will be planned for implementation across the three years, commencing in 2018. The selection of projects will be evidence based and identified through analysis of service and workforce trends, and engagement with the broad range of stakeholders.

The NTSSS will have a strong regional approach, and will focus on timing project delivery to align with the regional rollout schedule for the NDIS in Queensland.

Projects planned will be built around specific program areas including flexible training pathways, local partnerships and strategic projects, and will include pre-employment and school pathway pilots, and vocational placement support.

The NTSSS will bring together industry-led local networks comprising employers, registered training organisations, communities, and people with a disability to ensure the effective implementation of the NDIS in Queensland and appropriate values-based support for participants.

More information
Information updates on the 2017–20 NTSSS will be published on WorkAbility Qld’s website: http://workabilityqld.org.au/.

Alternately, the department can be contacted for more information by email at: programdesign@desbt.qld.gov.au.